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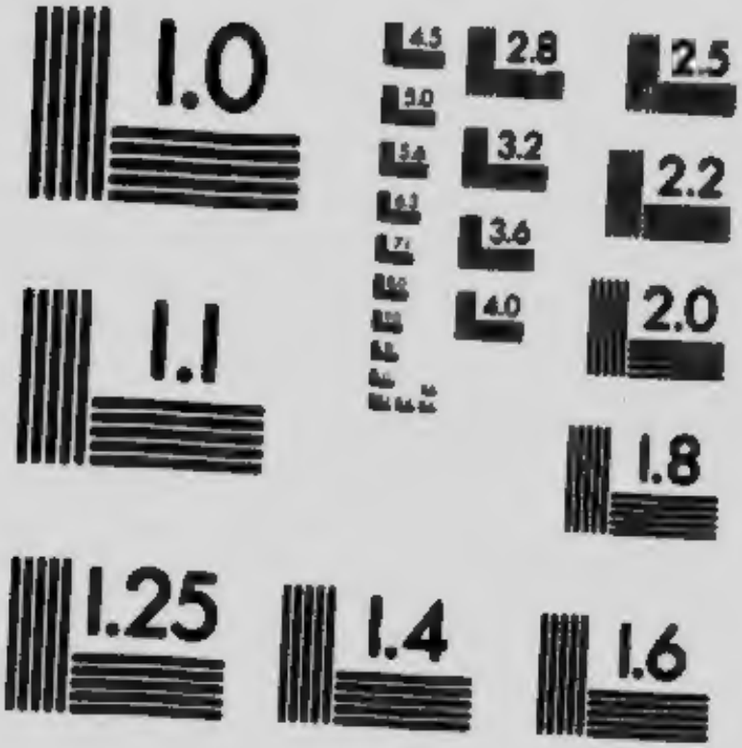

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1917

EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF PARLIAMENT

Speeches

DELIVERED BY

Rt. Hon.

SIR ROBERT LAIRD BORDEN

K.C., P.C., G.C.M.G.,

and

DR. MICHAEL CLARK

(LIBERAL M.P.)

in the

HOUSE OF COMMONS

July 17, 1917

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Rt. Hon. Sir ROBERT BORDEN (Prime Minister) moved:

That an humble Address be presented to His Most Excellent Majesty the King in the folowing words:—

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty:

Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty praying that you may graciously be pleased to give your consent to submit a measure to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to amend the British North America Act, 1867, in the manner following, or to the following effect:

"An Act to amend the British North America Act, 1867."

Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. Notwithstanding anything in the British North America Act, 1867, or in any Act amending the same, or in any Order in Council, or terms or conditions of Union, made or approved under the said Act, or under any Act of the Canadian Parliament, the term of the Twelfth Parliament of Canada is hereby extended until the Seventh day of October, 1918.

2. This Act may be cited as the British North America Act, 1917, and the British North America Act, 1867 to 1916, and this Act may be cited together as the British North America Act, 1867 to 1917.

All of which we humbly pray Your Majesty to take into your favourable and gracious consideration.

He said: In r' ing to present this motion to the House, I be
to call to the rec iection of honourable gentlemen the tact tha
on the 8th of February, 1916, I presented a similar motion. Tha
motion for the extension of the term of Parliament from 7t
October, 1916, to 7th October, 1917, was unanimously adopte
at that time. In the speech from the Throne this year referen
was made to a similar resolution, which would extend the life
this Parliament from the 7th of October, 1917, to the 7th Octobe
1918. Accordingly, the resolution which I now have the honou
to propose was placed upon the Order Paper in the latter pa
of May, and it now becomes my duty to present it to the Hous
in order that it may be considered and dealt with.

AN APPEAL FOR UNITY.

In my judgment, the reasons for proposing this motion a
quite as strong to-day as they were in 1916, and perhaps strong
They are fully set forth in the remarks which I addres ed to t
House at that time. I need only summarize them now. In t
first place, there would be, consequent upon a general electio
disunion and discord throughout this country. There has, up
the present time, been at least a seeming unity. Outside a
inside of Parliament men have worked together without rega
to party or race or creed. I believe that party political questio
have not been very much in the minds of the people during t
last three years, and I would hope that we might, on this oc
sion, arrive at some conclusion which would prevent the c
troversy and distraction consequent upon a general electi
More than that, the minds, the thoughts, the energies of the peo
would be diverted and turned aside from the supreme purp
of aiding in this war, and would be concentrated on politi
issues of relative insignificance. In short, a general electi
would leave, at least might leave, a divided nation. Besides th
I desire to emphasize the fact that the time and the energies
the ministers of the Crown during a general election would nec
sarily be diverted from the conduct of our country's participati
in the war to the activities of a political campaign. It goes wi
out question that members of the Government could not rem
silent under attack. They would be obliged to speak and to
their best efforts to justify themselves and the Administration
which they were responsible. In short, they would be obliged
take one course or the other; either to devote their energ
largely to the purposes of a political campaign, or to let t
campaign take care of itself, and continue, as they have b
doing in the past, to devote their entire energies to the du
which are imposed upon them by the necessities of the war.

More than that, there is the fact that we have about 300,000 men overseas at the present time. It is impossible for any one of us to anticipate with any reasonable degree of certainty what proportion of those men would have the opportunity of exercising their franchise, and what proportion would not have that opportunity. That would depend altogether upon the character of the operations in the field at that particular time. These men are the best elements of our population. They assuredly have a right to be heard in the selection of a parliament which will control the affairs of this country during the next five years; and, indeed, I might ask, what right would we have to entrust the affairs of this country for five years to a Parliament in whose selection these men might have so comparatively small a voice.

More than that, I believe that the discussion of political issues, the intrusion of party politics upon those men fighting our battles at the front and walking daily hand in hand with death, would be regarded by them as odious and indeed insulting.

EFFECT ON MILITARY SERVICE.

There is another consideration I must place before honourable gentlemen of this House, and to me it seems to be one of some significance. Very eloquent appeals have been made by gentlemen in this House, chiefly, I think, from the other side of the House, that before the Military Service Bill, which has been under the consideration of Parliament for some time, shall be put into operation, there shall be a united and earnest effort of all parties and all interests in this country for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain by voluntary enlistment the reinforcements which we seek to raise by the Military Service Bill. I have listened to those appeals with a great deal of interest. I have given very attentive thought to them.

I should be willing to give them every consideration consistent with the certainty of providing the necessary reinforcements for the Canadian troops at the front, but I do not understand how it would be possible to have a united and earnest appeal of that kind, or how it could possibly be effective under the imminence of an approaching general election. I hope, therefore, that hon. gentlemen, in coming to a conclusion upon the resolution which I am now proposing, will bear that in mind. The unity which would be necessary to make that appeal possible or effective could not be expected during a general election, or during the imminence of a general election; and so it would seem to me that if an election is forced upon the country at the present time, such a proposal must be abandoned.

PRECEDENTS GIVE AMPLE AUTHORITY.

As to precedents, I alluded to them when I spoke in t
House on February 8, 1916. The Parliament of Great Britain h
extended its life on three successive occasions, and the parl
mentary term there now stands extended until November
1917. New Zealand has extended its parliamentary term to
cember 19, 1918—a very long extension. Australia was preclu
from carrying out an extension by disturbing political conditi
which unfortunately prevented her representation in the Impe
War Cabinet. I referred, in speaking on the motion of last ye
to the precedent in Great Britain, when in 1716 a Parliam
which had been elected for only three years, extended its te
to seven years. In every self-governing nation of this Emp
since the commencement of this war it has been found impossi
to preserve the safe regard for constitutional conventions as
time of peace. Extraordinary powers have been conferred u
the Governments of each of these nations by their Parliame
and indeed, hon. gentlemen in this House know that here
Canada powers of a very extensive character have been confe
upon the Governor in Council by the War Measures Act of 1
an Act which reposes in the Governor in Council practically
the powers that could be exercised by Parliament under
British North America Act, except the power of taxation an
appropriation of public revenue.

SIR WILFRID'S OWN WORDS.

It may be urged that this proposal involves an alteratio
the Constitution. I regard it rather as a temporary suspe
of but one feature of the Constitution. Surely it is not a
serious step, for it merely provides that in Canada during
necessities of the war we shall have a parliamentary term
seven years instead of five years. Great Britain had a seven
term for her Parliament during a period of more than 150 y
and I am content to accept in that connection the view expre
by my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), who in spea
on this motion in February, 1916, said:

> It is not proposed here to alter the principle of the Constitution.
> not proposed to dispense with the control the people have over Parli
> It is simply proposed to extend for the time being the operation
> Constitution. If it were proposed to make away altogether with that
> ciple which is embodied in the Constitution, certainly I for my part
> oppose this measure with all my might. But no such thing is pro
> This measure simply proposes that the Constitution shall be suspend
> twelve months, at the expiration of which time it will resume its full

A GRAVE SITUATION.

It is not necessary, I am sure, that I should dwell upon the gravity of the situation with which this country, the whole Empire, and, indeed, the whole world, are presently confronted. When I spoke in this House on the 8th of February, 1916, we had sent 125,000 men overseas. To-day, our casualties are rapidly approaching that figure, and since my return from Great Britain on the 14th of May last, just about two months ago, they numbered 12,000. Since the extension of the term of Parliament sanctioned on the 8th day of February, 1916, Canada has sent no fewer than 200,000 men across the ocean to fight for liberty and civilization. We must realize, in dealing with this resolution, that our country, in common with the whole Empire, is facing a supreme test. The existence of the Empire, its institutions and liberties, are in peril. More than that, the foundations of civilization itself are endangered.

It would be impossible to overstate the transcendar issues which are hanging in the balance, and I am content to h them portrayed in the eloquent words which my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) addressed to this House in February, 1916, when he spoke thus upon this motion:

> There was nothing for Canada to do but to do what she did; to place at the disposal of England all her resources in men and money. Men there are to-day who sneer at the thought of Canada exhausting her resources to defend the Empire. Sir, who talks of the Empire to-day? There are other things greater than the Empire, great as it is. Civilization is greater than the Empire, and civilization is the issue.

And further, he said:

> Who can doubt but that if Germany were to win it would be the end of all we hold sacred. Who can doubt that it would be the end of that individual liberty, that independence of thought and action which citizens of all British countries value more than life itself. For my part, I re-echo the words lately spoken by a workman at the docks of Liverpool: **"Discuss not compulsion; discuss nothing; if Germany should win, nothing on God's earth would matter."**

So, I would ask my right hon. friend, in so terrible and unprecedented a situation, with the destinies of Canada, the fate of the whole Empire, the fate of the whole world, hanging in the balance, we should seriously consider technical adherence to every constitutional convention. In such conditions, are we to weigh carefully the advantage of a five-year parliamentary term as compared with a seven-year parliamentary term?

BURDENS WELL BORNE.

But in speaking as I do, very earnestly upon this subject, desire to make it perfectly plain that this Government in pr posing this resolution does not come before Parliament as a su pliant. Whenever it becomes desirable or necessary in the pub interest that the record of the Government should be submitt to the judgment of the people, we are quite prepared and willi to abide by the verdict of the electorate. During the past th years the responsibilities and burdens imposed upon those whom is entrusted the administration of public affairs have be greater than can possibly be realized by any one who has not be called upon to grapple with and fulfil them. We have discharg those responsibilities to the best of our ability; we have not spa ourselves in the effort to achieve their just accomplishment. all our endeavours there has been no regard for any considerat but the conscientious performance of our duty; otherwise should have been entirely unworthy of the trust reposed in To admit that mistakes may have been made is simply to ad that the members of the Government are human and theref not infallible, but I am confident that as few mistakes in conduct of the war have been made in Canada as in any part the Empire.

I, therefore, hope that it will be thoroughly understood t the Government does not propose this motion through any of an appeal to the electorate, if that should prove necessary, they feel it their duty to present this motion to the House the purpose of avoiding the distraction, bitterness and st which would inevitably ensue if the parliamentary term were extended for another year.

WHAT THE SOLDIERS THINK.

I hope hon. gentlemen will remember—and I am absolu confident of the fact as I state it—that political questions party differences have absolutely no place in the minds or he of those who are holding Canada's line beyond the Vimy R in France, and who are slowly pressing back the invaders they shall no longer desecrate the soil and decimate the po tion of France and Belgium with their horrible and barba methods of warfare. Among those brave Canadians there is one great over-mastering purpose—the winning of the wa liberty, civilization and humanity. That common purpose mated this Parliament in August, 1914, and in February. If it still inspires us, then I hope the appeal which I am making to this House will not be in vain.

It is with the deepest feeling of responsibility that I present this proposal to Parliament, and I hope that no word of mine will be wanting to impress upon the House the like sense of its responsibility. I realize fully that my right hon. friend who leads the Opposition has also a great responsibility devolving upon him. Upon an occasion like this in 1916, he spoke of himself as one who was the servant of the State and of the people, who owed duties to the State and to the people; duties and responsibilities of a character different from those appertaining to members of the Government, but, nevertheless, not of an inferior character.

STRONG FEELING IN THE COUNTRY.

In coming to the last consideration with which I shall trouble the House, I should like to say that many communications have come to me from almost every part of this country, as to the course which this Government ought to take, and which I myself should take, with regard to the passage of a resolution such as this. Those communications in very large number have urged upon me the desirability of enforcing and securing the passage of this resolution by a party majority, thus preventing the evils of a war election. The disadvantages of war election I have already emphasized. I am as fully conscious of them as any hon. gentleman of this House, but there are some things worse even than a war election. I have considered very carefully indeed where my duty lies in this respect. I have striven most earnestly to realize and to fulfil it, and I have reached a definite and, I believe, a wise conclusion.

In speaking on this subject in the House on February 8th, 1916, I said at the commencement of my remarks:

> It is hardly necessary to say that it is a motion which we should not press if hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House should oppose it as a party. In that case I should feel it to be my duty to withdraw the motion, and then it would naturally be for the Government to consider its course.

I also said:

> I entirely admit that no extension should be asked for by a Government in Canada, or should be approved, unless it appears to have the support of public opinion, and unless it is approved by both political parties.

My right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, speaking on this subject upon that occasion, dwelt upon the necessity of practical unanimity in this House, and in doing so used this language:

> If this resolution is not adoted unanimously, even though carried by a majority of this House, and even if my right hon. friend himself were to carry it to the foot of the throne, I have no doubt whatever that in the face

of such a minority as would be arrayed against it, the British Parli
would never grant the power sought. The British Parliament, I am
will never, under any circumstance, alter the Constitution of this co
except upon a unanimous resolution of the two branches of the Ca
Parliament.

EFFECT IN ENGLAND.

It is quite apparent from the principle which my right
friend laid down at that time, that if this resolution should
this House by a majority only, the controversy would no
here, but would be taken up beyond the seas, and the Parli
of the United Kingdom, in the midst of the greatest struggl
humanity has ever known, would be confused and distracted
conflicting cries from the two political parties in this countr
seems to me that an issue such as that which I have thus ou
is one that we ought not to contemplate for a moment.

This matter must be determined, it seems to me, i
Parliament by a unanimous, or practically unanimous vo
the resolution cannot be carried in this Parliament by a
mous, or practically unanimous, vote, then I adhere entir
the position which I assumed on the 8th day of February
and I would not seek to urge this motion upon the Hous
saying that, however, I do once more most earnestly app
hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House to give to this
tion the sanction of their unanimous approval. I need no
again the considerations which I have already expressed
must be apparent to the mind of every member of this H

A FAIR OFFER.

**I should like to see in this country an extension of t
liamentary term, a government, formed by a fair union
political parties pledged to carry on the effort of Canada
war until it shall be crowned with a victorious conclus
should like to see the efforts of both political parties in th
try thrown in that way into this great struggle in order t
issue which we all pray for may be brought about. I sho
to see that done, and if that were done I am sure that w
have by unanimous agreement in this House an extension
parliamentary term, and the carrying out of every measur
is necessary to the winning of the war.**

I realize fully that the conditions under which I prop
motion to-day are not precisely the same as those which p
in February, 1916.

REINFORCEMENTS MUST BE HAD.

There has been raised in this Parliament and in this country the question of the means by which the necessary reinforcements for the Canadian troops at the front shall be provided. My right hon. friend who leads the Opposition has not seen eye to eye with me in that regard. I hope the House and the country will realize that for 18 months before that measure was proposed in this House I had been urged in the most cogent and forcible terms, by representative men from every part of this country coming here in large numbers and in great delegations, to enforce compulsory military service. I sincerely desired to avoid taking that step unless it were absolutely necessary, but in the end I did take the step, because in my heart I believed, and I still believe, it to be absolutely necessary in order that we may fulfil the whole duty of this country in the war. I realized that the raising of that question placed upon my right hon. friend a great responsibility. I realized that the proposal of this motion imposes a great responsibility upon me, and that it places an equal responsibility, and perhaps even a greater responsibility, upon him.

As I said before, I do not purpose to press this motion if it is opposed in the way I have spoken of. I think there ought to be practical unanimity in this House before we should go to the Imperial Parliament for the purpose of obtaining the necessary legislation, and **I once more appeal to hon. gentlemen in this House to avoid the evil—the very great evil—of a war time election.** In placing this motion before the House and the country to-day, I am discharging as best I can the responsibility and duty thus devolving upon me.

It will be for my right hon. friend to see for himself the path of his duty, and to decide the responsibility which appertains to him as he may think that duty demands. So, my final word of appeal to this House is that this motion may be passed with that practical unanimity which will entitle us to present it to the Imperial Parliament for the necessary action and ratification by them, and I believe in doing so we will be taking a course which none of us, at any time in the future, can regret, a course absolutely in the interests of this Dominion, of this Empire, and of the great cause for which our troops at the front are fighting to-day.

DR. CLARK'S GREAT SPEECH

SIR WILFRID LAURIER HAVING OPPOSED THE RESOLUTION, DR. MICHAEL CLARK, M.P., RED DEER, ALBERTA, SAID:

MR. SPEAKER:—I rise to put myself on record in opposition to a considerable portion of the views which have been advanced by my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I do so, Sir, as I think every one in the House will admit, with perhaps the clearest record for consistency upon this question. My right hon. friend has referred to the fact that there was a great deal of evidence at certain times during the war, that there was a disposition, on the part at least of some of the hon. gentlemen who sit opposite, to have an election. It would be pertinent for me to ask my right hon. friend, did he approve of that disposition when it was shown on the other side of the House? I do not think he did. There was a time when every one in this House was in agreement with me on this question, and at that time my right hon. friend disapproved of the election tendency of certain hon. gentlemen opposite. He now fixes his approval by imitating their course of action. Personally, I have no brief to defend those who wish for an election during war time. They sit upon that or upon this side of the House. I am certain that the course of this debate will be viewed with very considerable surprise by the people of this country. Those of our people who are gifted with any fair amount of imagination and of memory cannot fail to contrast the proceedings in this House a year ago with the proceedings which have taken place to-day. Up to a certain point, I am bound to say that the proceedings to-day were an exact replica of what happened a year ago. **I do not think the Prime Minister of this country has ever delivered a speech with which he should have more reason to be satisfied than the speech with which he presented this resolution to the House. It was a consistent speech. It was cogent in its argument. It was manifestly sincere, and when the events of to-day are read and weighed by the people of this country, I believe the opinion of the people will be recorded in favour of that potent and consistent speech.**

I do not want to amplify—I am sure I could not improve—most of the arguments in the speech of the Prime Minister. I

will, however, take the liberty of referring to a few of them an
in doing so try to meet some of the points that have been raise
by my right hon. friend. There was much that he said to whic
I can take no exception. The position of this question is not qui
the same as it was last year. We cannot go on extending th
term of Parliament indefinitely.

FACING-BOTH-WAYS LAURIER.

But, if so far as the battle-front is concerned, there is a
difference between the position of last year and that of this yea
it is that the position of Canada's troops on the battle-front to-da
is vastly more precarious this year than it was last year. Th
being the fact on the battle-front, I am bound to say to my rig
hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) that I personally have not t
necessary acrobatic qualities to take a position diametrical
opposed to that which I took last year.

GREAT BRITAIN'S EXAMPLE.

My right hon. friend, in the course of his remarks, said th
he did not attach undue importance to the constitutional questi
In his impassioned and eloquent peroration, he made the C
stitution everything. He stood upon the Constitution of t
country and upon it alone. That is an inconsistency which I le
with himself, but I take the liberty to refer, nevertheless, to
constitutional question. Does my right hon. friend, or does a
hon. member on this side of the House, contend for a mom
that he has no regard for constitutional or parliamentary p
cedure in Great Britain? Where did we—where did the wo
learn constitutional or parliamentary procedure? I have hea
my right hon. friend discourse, in terms the most eloquent, on
Mother of Parliaments, which we all imitate. What are the fa
about the Mother of Parliaments? The people of Great Brit
do not forget the Constitution there. They have Zeppelin ra
over the city of London. They have bombs dropped amongst
children in the schools there. They know what the war mea
and they are apprised, as my right hon. friend was for two ye
apprised, of the war's seriousness. The Parliament sitting
Westminster to-day has been seven and one-half years in of
and next November, when its present term expires, it will h
been eight years in office. That is my answer upon the const
tional question. They knew something of constitutional and p
liamentary procedure in Great Britain, and that is what they h
done.

WILL SUSPEND WAR WORK.

I want to pass on to endorse a few more of the positions of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister. He said, very correctly, that the inevitable result of a general election would be a division of the country. We have that now, I admit, and the fault for it does not lie in Alberta, but **I am prepared to contend that we would have not only a divided country, but a paralyzed country, as the result of a general election.** My hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Pugsley) says that we have division now, and that an election would be a Sunday school picnic compared with the division we have. He says that the business of getting recruits has been taken out of the hands of the Government; that it has been taken out of the hands of Parliament; that it has been taken out of the hands of the people. Is that the only war work that is going on in the country? What about the Patriotic Fund, a fund in support of which Liberals and Tories throughout this country, forgetting their party differences and centering their activities only upon the great issue which is before the world to-day, the greatest which has ever occupied the attention of civilized man and civilization, have united in public meetings and are uniting every week almost every day of every week, in public meetings and in picnics to raise money voluntarily, and so shoulder at least some of the terrible burden that is being borne by our boys in the trenches? Does my right hon. friend contend that during the two months during which an election is going on those meetings will be held? Those people who are at present engaged in those meetings will then, on the contrary, be engaged perhaps in the discussion of the respective blame attaching to the two parties as to the merits of the Ross rifle. Has my hon. friend from St. John not heard of Red Cross work? Has he not heard of Belgium Relief? **I contend that the inevitable result of a general election during the war will be to paralyze the efforts of our people along all those lines, yes, and to paralyze them in a way which will make it almost impossible to resume them.**

ONE ISSUE—WIN THE WAR.

I go further than that. What is to be the issue in an election? What is the dividing issue upon which we are to fight? On the great and overwhelming question of to-day there is only one issue. It is "Win the War." Every one on that side says so—not every one on this side says so. But, my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) says so. He has said so in so many words in the speech which he has delivered to the House to-night. Then, there can be no issue before the people on the main questions, the only

questions which are engaging the attention, not only of this cou try, but of the civilized world to-day. Then, what will be th issue? What is the alternative policy to winning the war? The is only one possible answer. It is "Winning the elections." we analyze these things down to the bottom, we are compelle with all charity, to conclude that this election is being forced at this time by a refusal of extension, with a view, not to helpi the war, not to saving the Empire, but to exchanging the peop who are in office for those who are opposed to them for the pu pose of securing the sweets of office. In other words, those wh are notoriously doing least to win this war are forcing th country into the turmoil of a general election, when the wor and all that is best in it are being animated by the spirit service, of sacrifice, and of unselfishness, and these people a doing so for the most selfish of all reasons—the satisfaction petty, personal ambitions, when the safety of the world and civilization is at stake.

NAKED SELF INTEREST.

I, Sir, should hesitate to stand as one of a group of the o utterly selfish men to be found in the British Empire or in t civilized world at the present time. If there is no issue of poli in an election, upon what does an election necessarily turn? have not been left in any doubt in this House to-night as to th point. The election necessarily turns on personalities. It m do so. If there is no difference of principle—and there is between my two right hon. friends, because they both say: want to win the war—the election inevitably degenerates int strife of personalities. We have had ample evidence of that night. The die is cast on the principle laid down by my ri hon. friend (Sir Robert Borden) and endorsed by my right h friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). We are going to have an electi The leader of the Opposition has got his work in early; he delivered his first election speech to-night.

WHAT AN ELECTION MEANS.

I do not purpose following his example very far. At same time, the merits of the Ross rifle constitute a subject u which my right hon. friend is skating upon very thin ice. not know exactly what he thinks about the Ross rifle, becaus one breath he told us that its use had cost us the lives of m of our boys, and then in the next breath he agreed with ex-Minister of Militia (Sir Sam Hughes) that it was the b rifle of the two. I suppose he remembered at that moment

the Ross rifle was the precious pet of an hon. gentleman now gone from us who for many years was Minister of Militia in the Liberal Government. If he does not remember it, I remember very well hearing the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) engage in an impassioned defence of the Ross rifle in this House of Commons, and indulge in jeers at those in England who ventured to question the omniscience of the Government, it being the Government of my right hon. friend who now leads the Opposition. I do not say that to get the other side of this argument right, I say it to give an illustration of what is going to happen in a general election. If you cease to fight on principles you descend to personalities. Does my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) view that with equanimity? That question is bound to be asked. If we come to that point, does my right hon. friend contend that with the driving force behind him, if he becomes Prime Minister of this country, he will have a more coherent force, a more determined force for the winning of the war than is now sitting behind my right hon. friend the Prime Minister? Does the coherence of his force, does the strength of the determination of one considerable portion of his force, show itself by driving a Cabinet Minister who is at present in favour of winning the war into the refuge of a cabin on board a steamer, for taking a particular view as to how it should be won. **Does my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) contend that he will derive enormous strength for the conduct of this war from people who chase a British soldier from Fletcher's Field in Montreal, into a tramcar, and then break the windows of the car?** There will be many more subjects arise when we descend to a personal fight than the subject of the Ross rifle. If it was left to the question of the Ross rifle, I am not at all sure that my right hon. friend would not have the better of the argument.

BORDEN'S PEERLESS POSITION.

But the question will inevitably be asked, if you determine to settle this on the line of personalities: Who are the people most likely to conduct this war to a satisfactory conclusion? And I venture to say that, so far as clearness of motive is concerned, so far as determination is concerned, so far as working in season and out of season, day and night, with a single eye to victory for the great principles that are at stake upon the battlefields of Europe to-day, there is no man in Canada who is fit to stand in the same company as my right hon. friend the leader of the Government.

THE COST!

We have ample evidence given to us that the faults of Government will be the main subject of a general election. the exposure of the faults of the Ross rifle from the Atlanti the Pacific, will the detailing of incidents or supposed incid such as have constituted the first electioneering speech of right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, help to win war? Will it encourage recruiting? I venture to think th campaign conducted by my right hon. friend the leader of Opposition, pure as are his own motives, great Imperial states as he has been—and I say it without one single reservation, it with a full heart and with full sincerity—but pure as ar motives, he knows that to expose these facts from one end o country to the other must have the effect of deterring recru and making people wonder whether this war is worth pursu and paralyzed as his hands will be during the war by what be one of the main origins of his power; lacking the driving on grounds that I do not want to amplify, but which I look with sorrow, he will not be in a position, he cannot be in a tion, to go on with this war with the determination that has acterized the composite supporters of the war.

AN IGNOBLE CAMPAIGN.

For the good of the country, for the purity of our politic next general election ought not to be fought upon the faults Government. Every Administration suffers for its faults, an Administration will be no exception to that rule. But wh exposure of the faults of the Government take the mythical of stories of the jamming of rifles and the weeping of men trenches, it constitutes not only an ignoble campaign but an ob to the further successful prosecution of the war, and I vent **think that a general election carried on by my right hon. (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) along the lines that he has taken to will not only divide Canada, but will paralyze Canada; it w Canada out of the war and mark her as a degenerate and in portion of the British Empire.**

UNDEMOCRATIC DEMOCRACY.

Now I come to another of the arguments of my righ friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) as to the absence of the soldie the impossibility of taking their votes. My right hon. frie canted eloquently upon democracy. Has he no regard for th tion of democracy that is across the seas? Has he no rega

the 400,000 men who have given up everything they have, or are prepared to give it up? My deepest rooted objection to an election in war time—and this was the ground upon which I opposed the Soldiers' Voting Bill, because I held there should be no election during the war—is that we propose to conduct an unseemly wrangle for jobs from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and concerning how the country should be governed in the absence of those heroes but for whose efforts we should not have any country to govern.

I have tried to amplify a few of the arguments of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister. I have said that in the presentation of those arguments, the debate lost nothing in dignity from its character of last year. This afternoon when the Prime Minister sat down, I expected a repetition of what happened last year. I expected a repetition at least to this extent: that my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition would have followed the right hon. gentleman who leads the Government. I thought we had come to the moment of abdication on the part of my right hon. friend. Last year the speech of the Prime Minister was backed up by the leader of the Opposition in a speech of moving and stately eloquence. Canada was committed to undivided efforts for the winning of this war, and that speech of moving and stately eloquence was so able and so cogent that it deprived the rest of this Assembly of any desire to speak.

GRAHAM'S TRICKERY.

But what happened this year? A lieutenant (Mr Graham) of my right hon. friend arose and made what I venture to characterize as a dilatory and by no means straightforward motion; that is why I voted against it. Everybody in this country, fortunately for myself, knows that I favour the substance and principle of his amendment, but it was a right amendment introduced at a wrong time. Having so far endeavoured to attain, and I think having attained, some character of straightforwardness in the minds of the Canadian people, I thought I could venture to run the risk of any misinterpretation that might come by my vote, by being straightforward still and running no risk of being thought to have taken part in what, after all, was more trickery than statesmanship. I am naturally precluded by the rules of this House from saying anything on that amendment, and I had no great desire to speak to it because I have spoken on it again and again, and the people of this country know where I stand on the question of direct taxation and the conscription of wealth to the war. Following the speech of the hon. member for South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) we had a speech from my hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Pugsley), and then finally we come to the main subject before the House.

LAURIER'S CLEVER EVASION.

I did think when I rose, that I would make an appeal to right hon. gentlemen who lead the respective sides in this H I cannot help contrasting what happened last year with what happened this year. **No one can turn his back upon his prev opinions with more delightful grace than my right hon. friend leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier).** Long pra brings one to perfection along certain lines. However, I am b to say that if the people of this country will read the speech last year and will read the speeches of to-night, they will con the conclusion that the Prime Minister's position is the same, the conditions are the same in the main, that the needs are the but that the change is in my right hon. friend the leader o Opposition. What that change is, I have already characte and I do not think the people of this country will be in any about it.

A MODERATE PROPOSAL.

I wish that, even now, the two right hon. gentlemen who the respective parties in this House would consider a mod proposition. I have stated, taking my illustration from what said by my right hon. friend who preceded me (Sir W Laurier), that an election on the grounds I have mentioned be a misfortune for the country; I have said that it should n fought upon the faults of the Government; I have said th cannot be fought upon a difference of issue as to policy, be both sides pretend to have the same policy. It would be a did thing for this country if, even now, moderate counsels s prevail, and a course of procedure that would redound t lasting honour of Canada. What should the next electi fought upon? When the war is nearing an end, of which is no sign at the present moment, the question of the recon tion of Canada will come up for consideration, because it be remembered that the party returned to power in an el now will be in power four or five years and will have the dir of the destinies of this country along certain lines of policy. the war is nearing a conclusion, and when the passions rais it are being hushed by the process of time, the issues of struction will arise; and then old divisions, old landmarks ing the one party from the other, would re-appear. I say it be a splendid thing for this country if we have maintain union as to the war to the finish—such union as we have if we had kept our people at least united, because after must be remembered that any disunion there is, is largely

this House. Our people are still united. I get as many protests against an election in war times from Liberals as I do from Conservatives. I may say I get even more, because Liberals naturally write to me. **Our people are still united, and it would be a splendid thing to have kept that union up until the end of the war, and not allowed those other issues to arise. Fix a time—a more limited time than the Government proposes, if you like—and let those issues be debated at another session of Parliament, knowing that those are the things which divide the two sides of politics in this country; and having put our policies of reconstruction before the nation, go to the country upon them.**

LAURIER'S GREAT CHANCE.

The Government is asking for a year's extension. The longest extension which has ever been given in the Old Country is eight months. The two right hon. gentlemen have a great responsibility. One has discharged his responsibility. I leave my right hon. friend beside me (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to deal with his in his own way. They enjoy in an unparalleled degree the confidence of their fellow-citizens, and I say it would be a great thing for Canada and the Empire if they could get together yet and agree to an eight months' extension, which would take us over until next June. In all probability by that time the war will have passed out of its acute stages, and the considerations which arise to-day will not then exist. I put this to my right hon. friends in the best spirit, as a patriot, as a lover of the country, as a lover of the Empire, and as a lover of the great cause at issue in this war. I feel, however, the appeal will be in vain. If they do not come together, we are going to have a general election. Well, in that case, we shall have to say, let it come. Let the graves of our dead be desecrated. There are twenty thousand or thirty thousand Canadian soldiers at present lying in British and French hospitals. Let their hearts be wrung as their bodies have already been wrung—so that we may settle which side is most to blame for the Ross rifle, and whether it would not be well to have a change in the personnel of the Government at the present time. My views, as expressed in these few words are perhaps better put in an article in the London Daily News and Leader, of April 8 last; which I will read to the House.—The Daily News and Leader is not too indulgently friendly to the present Government at Westminster, and April 18 was the day after the extension was carried in the British House. It said:

The Bill further prolonging the life of the present Parliament passed its second reading yesterday. There was no serious opposition to the proposal, and there should be none. An election at the present time would be an outrage, which the country would very justly resent. **There is no issue before**

the constituencies, and there is only one task for Parliament. It is to on with the war. An election, so far from promoting this object, would gravely interfere with it, and would raise political issues which the cou does not want to see raised now and which cannot be settled in the mid the dominating preoccupations of the war. We hope this will be the extension necessary, but this extension is, on every ground, imperative.

FACE THE ISSUE SQUARELY.

As I said, I have not much hope of my appeal bearing f after the very firm and determined stand taken by my right friend the leader of the Opposition, and we shall have to face election. We shall have to go on with it. Well, the responsib will be fixed by the people of this country, and I do not think after the issues are fully debated and the circumstances fully un stood, there will be much doubt as to where to place the blam how to judge the motives which have brought the election. For part, I would say, if the die is cast, the sooner this debate come an end, the better. Let us clear our minds of cant, and let us our conduct of sham. Let us get to the election. If there is t an issue, let us get to it. If this matter should go to a vote, I w vote for the extension of Parliament. I should be afraid to otherwise. I should be afraid to take any step during nearly t years, which would cast any doubt anywhere that any but public object I cared for at the moment, and that is the winnin the war.

I should be afraid to take any step which would lead m fear that the thirty thousand Canadian corpses in France Belgium might possibly rise out of their graves in the shap ghosts and point their gaunt fingers at me as having at the of the third year of the war given up the great task, or trie persuade Canada to give up the great task of being a un country and doing her full share for victory, peace, free justice and humanity.

THEY'VE CHANGED THEIR TUNE

Now that several hundreds of thousands of Canadian soldiers have gone overseas, many of whom will be unable to vote, the Liberals who are led by Sir Wilfrid Laurier demand a war-time election. In the absence of the soldiers they expect to win by getting the solid French and foreign vote against the war policy of the Government. While most of the soldiers were here these politicians were against a war-time election, as these utterances below testify:

SIR WILFRID LAURIER:

If in what has been done or what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no criticism, and we shall offer no criticism **so long as there is danger at the front.**

—House of Commons, Aug. 19, 1914.

But I do not care, for my part, so long as the war lasts, to open the portals of office with **that bloody key**. . . . .

I will pledge myself and the party that we shall stop all preparations and think of nothing but the war. . . . .

We shall not do one thing to prevent the Government from going on with the war policy.

—Federation of Liberal Clubs, Toronto, May 21, 1915.

At the present time the only thing we have to think of is to finish the war, and to adjourn to a future date those domestic problems which will have to be taken up later.

The war is still on. Upon the policy introduced by the Government to discharge the duties we owe to the Mother Country, we have taken no issue with the Government. We have supported their policy, and therefore there is no cause for an appeal to the country.

The war has not made a case for a general election.

—Montreal Reform Club, December 12, 1914.

HON. WILLIAM PUGSLEY, M.P.:

It would be deplorable, in my opinion, to have the people divided u party questions.

Another of the reasons why I favor putting off an election **until a the war** is because I think it would be a great pity to hold one just w the energies of all the people of Canada, and especially the members of Government, who are primarily charged with the duty of attendin recruiting and equipment of the soldiers, should be devoted to this one

—Interview given to Manitoba Free Press, Winnipeg, Sept. 15.

E. M. MACDONALD, M.P. (Pictou):

An election while the struggle is raging for liberty and humanity w be a crime. An election during the war would divide the Dominion; t **should be no election during the war.**

—Interview given to Toronto Star, September 17.

TORONTO STAR:

It has been said that a general election held at this time woul unwise and unpatriotic. To-day stronger language might be used. It w be indecent to-day to introduce an element of party strife not only Canada, but into the very field of battle.

—April 28, 1915.

If a general election is held before the end of the war, we hav doubt the parties will do as they always have done. . . . The Go ment and the Opposition and the country have a year and a half ahea them in which there need be no general election. We hope the war wi over by that time. If not, the parties may come to some agreemen postponing their fight until the world fight is concluded.

—May 15, 1915

If the Prime Minister resisted the attempt to bring on an early ele he did well. But he ought to do more. He ought first to say there wi no election until after the war if he can help it; he ought then to advantage of the unity of the country and the absence of party strife.

—June 9, 1915

It is obviously in the public interest that there should be no ele during the war. . . . . .

There should be no partisan conflict during the war.

—August 30, 1915

We do not want an election now, or during the war.

—September 9, 1915.

At present all we need to say is: no election now. No party politics now; no election during the war. No party politics during the war.

—September 11, 1915.

No Government needs to ask the sanction of the country for any plan for encouraging the manufacture of war munitions and other supplies in Canada. No Government needs to ask the sanction of the country for any measure intended to help our Allies. . . . .

Why should the House of Commons elected four years ago be suddenly dismissed as if it had been disgraced and were unworthy of the confidence of the country?

—September 13, 1915.

THE CHRONICLE, HALIFAX:

We need not pause to remark that election day should not come until the war is over. Every decent-minded Canadian, regardless of party, knows and admits that.

—April 12, 1915.

Everyone, Conservatives and Liberals alike, state that it would be most unfortunate to do anything which would interfere with the present revival in business. Apart altogether from sentimental and patriotic grounds, the business interests of the country are decidedly opposed to the holding of an election.

—May 14, 1915.

The idea of an election at this time can arise from party motives alone. There is no necessity for an election. There should be no election. It should not be suggested that there should be one.

—September 10, 1915.

Those who seek to divide the country from within while it is engaged in a life and death struggle with the enemy from without, are traitors to the cause of freedom. They are traitors to the best interests of their country. They are not worthy to be free.

—September 11, 1915.

The game is not worth the candle. . . . . We can win this war one way and one way only; that is to wage the fight on the battlefield Europe and not on the hustings at home For this reason we are of t firm conviction that there should be no election at this time, even at t expense of the Liberals remaining in opposition. We place the count before party. With us it is "Canada First."

September 13, 1915.

THE RECORDER, BROCKVILLE (Hon. G. P. Graham's new paper):

There is only one way by which the votes of the men who are do our fighting can be recorded without any change in the law, however, that is by postponing the election **until the war is over.**

—April 12, 1915.

Both parties in Great Britain have agreed that there will be no elect until the war is over. . . . Let the Government put first things first. Let the election be held at the close of the war, but do not let Canada m herself ridiculous in the eyes of the world by holding an election while Empire, of which she forms a part, is taking part in the most tremend conflict in the history of the world.

—April 21, 1915.

THE HERALD, MONTREAL:

Apart from the indecency of attempting to snatch party advan from the crisis which Canada and the whole Empire is facing, it be remembered that an election will bring about grave confusion neglect to the vital affairs of Canada and the Empire. The prob arising out of Canada's participation in the war are enough to keep ministers absorbed in work. . . . If they prove recreant to that tr if they say that the business of Canada and of the Empire can go while they neglect their duties and stump the country stirring up poli strife and hatred—then **they deserve the fate that would fall to a so who failed his country in the hour of need.**

—April 22, 1915

THE ADVERTISER, LONDON:

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has promised that the Opposition will in no obstruct the Government in its war policy. Rather will it actively in every way within its power to lighten the heavy task of the Govern

—February 10, 191

In Great Britain it seems that both parties have agreed there should be no election till the war is over. But then in that country they seem willing to place country before party. We fear that is a standard of political morality we have hardly reached in Canada.

—February 10, 1915.

THE BULLETIN, EDMONTON (Hon. Frank Oliver's newspaper):

In other words, they (the Government) propose to prostitute patriotism for partyism, to secure a new lease of power, upon an issue which must be decided on the battlefield, and not in the council chamber, an issue in which bullets and not ballots are the arguments.

—January 20, 1915.

An Ottawa despatch cites the possibility that the Canadian Parliament may follow the example of the British Parliament and extend its term so as to avoid a general election until after the war. Undoubtedly that ought to be done.

—February 11, 1915.

THE TRIBUNE, WINNIPEG:

The main thing at this juncture is to avoid the wrangling and distraction of a political contest.

—September 3, 1915.

THE TIMES, ST. JOHN, N.B.:

All that Sir Robert Borden needs to do is to announce that there will be no election until after the war.

—September 11, 1915.

Following is the vote of the members of the House of
mons on the second reading of the Military Service Bill,
5, 1917:

YEAS:

Messieurs

Alguire,
Ames (Sir Herbert),
Armstrong,
(Lambton),
Armstrong
(York, O.),
Arthurs,
Ball,
Barnard,
Bennett (Calgary),
Bennett (Simcoe),
Best,
Blain,
Blondin,
Borden (Sir
Robert),
Bowman,
Boyce,
Boys,
Brabazon,
Bradbury,
Buchanan,
Burnham,
Burrell,
Carvell,
Champagne,
Charlton,
Clark (Bruce),
Clark (Red Deer),
Clarke (Wellington),
Clements,
Cochrane,
Cockshutt,
Cromwell,
Crothers,
Cruise,
Currie,
Davidson,
Doherty,
Donaldson,
Douglas,
Edwards,
Elliot,
Fisher,
Foster (Sir George),
Fripp,
German,
Glass,
Graham,
Green,
Guthrie,
Hanna,
Hartt,
Hazen,
Henderson,
Hepburn,
Hughes (Sir Sam),
Jameson,
Kemp,
Knowles,
Lalor,
Lewis,
Loggie,
Macdonell,
Maclean (Halifax),
Maclean (York, O.),
MacNutt,
McCoig,
McCraney,
McCurdy,
McLean (Queen's,
P.E.I.),
McLean (Sunbury),
McLeod,
McMillan,
Marshall,
Meighen,
Merner,
Middlebro,
Morphy,
Morris,
Morrison,
Munson,
Nesbitt,
Neely,
Nicholson,
Nickle,
Northrup,
Osler (Sir Edm
Pardee,
Paul,
Rainville,
Reid,
Robidoux,
Roche,
Rogers,
Ross,
Schaffner,
Scott,
Sévigny,
Sexsmith,
Shepherd,
Sinclair,
Smith,
Steele,
Stevens,
Stewart (Ham
Sutherland,
Taylor,
Thoburn,
Thompson (Yu
Thomson
(Qu'Appelle)
Thornton,
Truax,
Turriff,
Walker,
Wallace,
Webster,
Weichel,
White (Sir Th
Wilson (Trent
Wright—118.

he House of Com-
Service Bill, July

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Qu'Appelle),
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right—118.

NAYS:

Messieurs

Achim,
Barrette,
Bellemare,
Bickerdike,
Boivin,
Boulay,
Bourassa,
Boyer,
Brouillard,
Bureau,
Cardin,
Chisholm,
Copp,
Delisle,
Demers,
Descarries,
Devlin,
Ethier,
Forget (Sir Rodolphe),
Fortier,
Gauthier (Saint-Hyacinthe),
Gauvreau,
Girard,
Guilbault,
Hughes (King's, P.E.I.),
Kay,
Kyte,
Lachance,
Lafortune,
Lanctôt,
Lapointe (Kamouraska),
Lapointe (Montreal, St. James),
Laurier (Sir Wilfrid),
Lemieux,
McCrea,
Marcil (Bonaventure),
Marcile (Bagot),
Martin,
Michaud,
Molloy,
Mondou,
Murphy,
Oliver,
Pacaud,
Papineau,
Paquet,
Patenaude,
Power,
Proulx,
Robb,
Seguin,
Tobin,
Turgeon,
Verville,
Wilson (Laval)—55.

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